

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4200.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 648 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4200.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4200) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2005, and for other purposes, with Mr. HASTINGS of Washington in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) each will control 60 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER).

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, this is a bill that was put together with the bipartisan work of all members of the House Committee on Armed Services, the defense bill for the United States. It was engaged in with a great deal of detail by Republicans and Democrats to try to do the very best we could for the people that wear the uniform of the United States.

Beyond that, Mr. Chairman, we have had enormous publicity the last number of days about the mess at Abu Ghraib. I estimated we have probably devoted as much media attention to that mess involving now, as identified, some seven personnel, as we did to the Normandy invasion, and that is an imbalance. It is time to refocus.

The subjects of the refocus should be the 135,000 great personnel doing their job in Iraq and the tens of thousands doing their job in Afghanistan and around the world in this war against terrorism. So I just thought I might start out, Mr. Chairman, by reminding my colleagues that while that much-publicized mess was taking place with just a few people at Abu Ghraib Prison, Master Sergeant Tony Prior was taking on an enemy position in Afghanistan and was single-handedly taking

out four insurgents, the last one in hand-to-hand combat to win the Silver Star.

Jeffrey Bohr, Gunnery Sergeant Jeffrey Bohr was over in Iraq laying down a field of fire to protect his wounded Marines who otherwise would have been killed, and he laid down that field of fire until he himself was killed.

I have dozens of such citations, Mr. Chairman, on the leadership desk, and I would hope that Members walk down. And if their heads are filled with all of the publicity about a few bad apples at Abu Ghraib Prison, I want them to pick up those citations and read about the good apples, the great Americans who fill out this 2.5-million-person force that wear the uniform of the United States, active, Guard and Reserve.

This bill is a big bill, and my great partner, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON), the ranking member, have worked on it along with all of the members of the committee. Almost all of our members have gone to Iraq now. A lot of them have also gone to Afghanistan, some of them multiple times. We have visited troops, held extensive hearings, and we put together a bill that we think supplies the where-withal, the equipment for our troops to get the job done.

Let me go over a couple of those things, and then I want to listen to my colleagues on the Democrat side of the aisle who have been such great partners in this endeavor.

First, we have tried to focus on this theater in Iraq because our people need equipment, they need to have the very best equipment. They are over there in the heat and in enemy fire with oppressive living conditions. We have devoted and focused our dollars on that theater, so we pulled some money out of some areas that are not right now relevant, closely relevant, to that warfighting theater, more long-range things, things that are peripheral.

We focused that money on things like force protection, up-armored Humvees, steel for the trucks, the 5-ton trucks for the Army, 7-ton trucks for the Marine Corps, replenishment of ammunition, surveillance capability so we can see the bad guys and engage them before they can get in tight to our troops. All of the leverage we can give them with high technology, we give them in this bill.

We also look to their families. We have this 3.5 percent pay raise across the board, we have an expansion of the amount of money that our troops now get for hazardous duty and for separation from their family. We have also put in a survivor benefit for the widows of our military people and for the widowers of our military people so they will not have this offset against Social Security.

We have tried to do a lot of things on the people's side. We have a great bill with our military housing, our MILCON projects. We have privatization, the cap removed from 2006 on, and

we are going to work to make sure there is no seam between 2005 and 2006.

Beyond that, the ranking member and I and a number of other folks have been working and looking at force levels. We now have 10 Army divisions; we used to have 18 in 1991. We have a relatively small Marine Corps, roughly 177,000. We realize we are going to need more people.

And for families who say, How come Joe is not here again for Christmas, whether he is Guard, Reserve, or active, one answer is, we have such a small force that the people have to go more often. And so we have increased in strength by some 10,000 this year, 10,000 next year and 10,000 the next year, and that coincides with Chief of Staff of the Army Schumacher's plan to increase the fighting strength of the U.S. Army by three brigades this year, three brigades next year, and four brigades the year after to add 10 new fighting brigades to the Army for a total of 43. We have also increased the U.S. Marines Corps by 3,000 personnel per year for the next 3 years.

To do that and to do a lot of the other things that we are flowing to the troops, we have also bolted onto this package a supplemental for \$25 billion. That supplemental will handle the closing months of this year to make sure that our troops do not run thin on supplies or replenishment or new capabilities in the last few months of this year. It also helps General Schumacher to stand up this new modular force that he is putting into effect and reshaping the Army.

So we have that \$25 billion bolted on, and that has lots of good stuff for the troops. It helps to sustain us through any tough things that we may see in the last several months of this year.

Now, we are going to need a new supplemental. We all know that. The chairman of the Committee on the Budget, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. NUSSLE) talked about that and put a \$50 billion wedge in the budget, acknowledging that fact; and we are going to have to come around at some point and have a new supplemental to get through 2005. It all depends on how far we can reasonably project. We think this \$25 billion bolt-on that we are doing will do the right things for the troops.

We have gone right down through the unfunded requirements list, things that our Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and our Air Force sent to us, things that they said we need, Congress, we do not have the money for them. And we went in and paid for those things so we can pull them out and deliver them to the troops in this supplemental we have bolted on.

So this is a great bill. I want to commend the ranking member and all of the great members of the Armed Services Committee. We have great subcommittee chairmen who have worked some very tough issues; their ranking members have worked them hard, and we have brought this bill, in what is a